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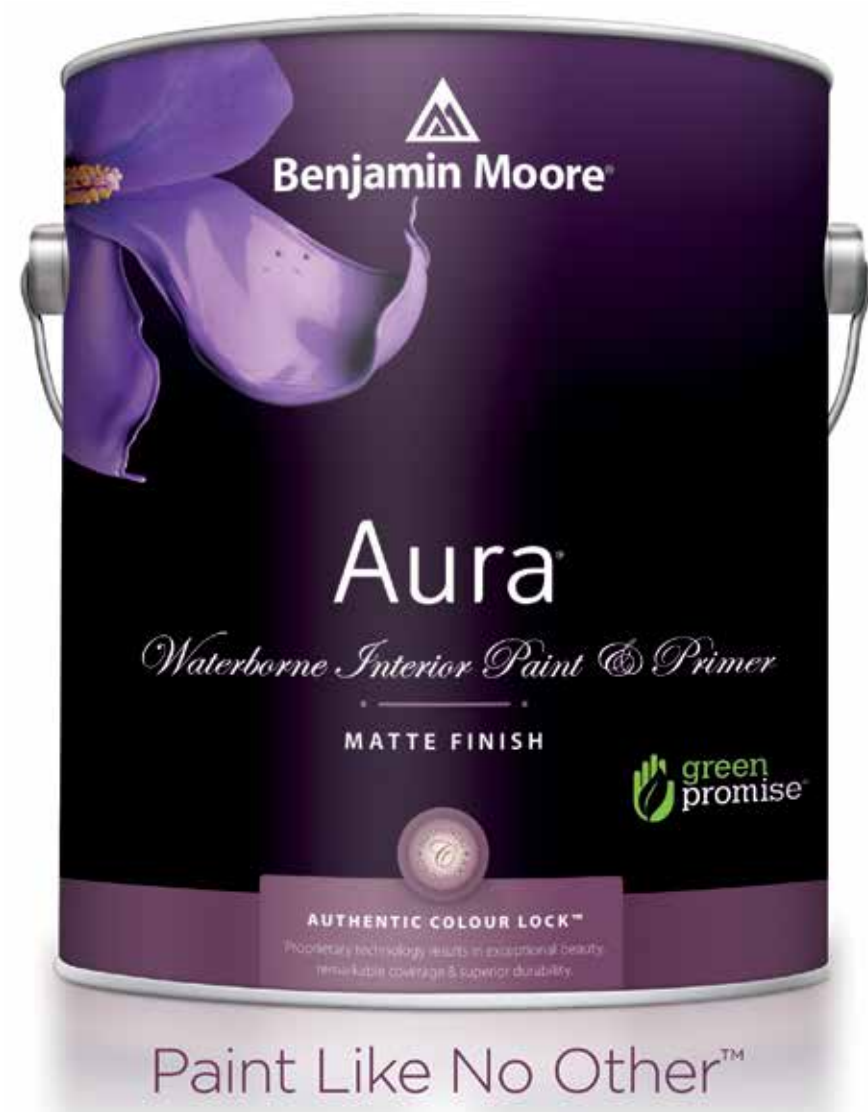
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upcoming fall exhibits



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Maya Eventov



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Victor Tkachenko

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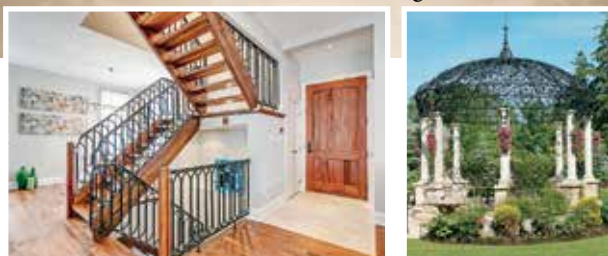
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editor's note



WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE,

you're not just looking at buying a home, you're becoming part of a neighbourhood, and not all neighbourhoods are created equal.

When we first bought into the Alton Village community, an enclave of homes in north Burlington, all I knew was that we

were buying into the appeal of a family-friendly neighbourhood.

Over the last five years, I've grown to love my 'hood for many reasons. It's a place where kids play in front yards, and people get out and get to know each other and help each other.

Some days, hubby and I will go for a stroll down the block, family in tow, and end up at an impromptu neighbourhood gathering on the sidewalk. Kids and dogs run and play as the adults chat and catch up. I love this. It's one of my favourite things about where we live. You can't plan it, but it's a sense of community that happens organically over time.

Sure, like any 'hood, nothing is perfect. But here's what I do know. It's a place where girls' nights happen on a whim. Where a neighbour will help push your car out of the snow or mow your lawn. It's where the annual Victoria Day weekend community fireworks have become a tradition. (Thanks Jacques Gauthier!) Where someone will pick your child up off the sidewalk when he's skinned a knee. It's where people show up for tree planting events, shovels in hand. Where neighbours drop off warm biscuits or a handful of peppers straight from the garden. It's where an annual street party sponsored by local businesses brings food, fun and community together to fundraise for Team Diabetes Canada. (Thanks Mark Adams!) It's book clubs, card games and outdoor movie nights. It's this and much, much more.

This issue, I'm excited to be profiling two homes from my very own community. The area is steeped in history, and one home feature highlights how the community began, while the other highlights how the story continues. What inspires your sense of community? Happy fall!

Gina Makkar

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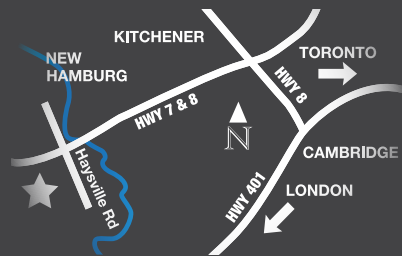
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Interior Designer **Dolores Pian**
shares her ideas.

LOWER LEVELS NOT THE DUNGEONS THEY USED TO BE

Gone are the days of low-ceilinged unfinished basements that smell of mould and mildew; meagre places to do laundry and store sports gear and Christmas decorations.

Now that fixer-uppers in some cities are going for a million dollars or more, spending \$100,000 to \$150,000 doesn't sound unreasonable to reclaim existing space. Basement renos are a lot cheaper than an addition and much easier than an attic.

In posh neighbourhoods with historical designation and height restrictions, contractors are now digging deep to create spaces three or four levels below ground, so that they can house bowling alleys, Olympic-size pools – you name it, just dig it. Called “iceberg” architecture, what you see above ground is just the tip of what lies below.

For regular folks, the new-found square footage becomes a fantasy space. When all the necessary rooms for daily living are accounted for above ground, the basement becomes a space where your imagination can run wild.

That's when I dub basements “The Lower Level Retreat.” With a shift in name comes a shift in thinking about the space and its possibilities and functions.

These spaces can house entertainment centres with large 50- to 60-inch televisions, sizes that would normally dominate a regular living area.

For the practically minded, extra storage room is always welcome and if you're going to have a laundry room, then why not add a little panache. The ultimate home office can double as a guest room when grandma and grandpa come to visit.

Other leisure lair spaces include wine cellars, spa retreats that double as doggie grooming centres with heated floors, therapeutic pools for athletic injuries or music studios. The possibilities are endless.

How do you design a livable, lovable space that feels warm and cosy? Let's start with the basics:

Planning

Open plan seems to work best. If you need to enclose spaces for privacy, then make the walls moveable, to enclose or open a space as required.

Building

Ideally, a finished eight-foot ceiling suits everyone best. Remember that recessed pot lights, flooring and under-floor infrastructure all reduce available height.

PHOTO: MIRO ZAGNELI



Custom cabinetry keeps wires hidden but accessible.

Doors with a clean profile complete the look.

Make sure to address structural issues and all possible moisture issues. Hire a contractor who knows all about basements.

I prefer to add radiant floor heat. If not the whole floor, then in the washroom or spa area. When your tootsies are warm, then the rest of you will feel warm, cosy and pampered.

Lighting

The trick is to find light fixtures and bulbs that spread light in all directions, filling surfaces with light and minimizing harsh shadows to help decrease the cave-like effect.

Choose a warm colour temperature of 2700 kelvin (K) or 3000K. Bluish light of 4000K is cool and will feel fridge-like and not somewhere you'd like to hang out, especially in the winter.

Use different sources of lighting throughout the space such as lamps and LED strips in built-in shelving.

Décor & Design

Raise sofas and other large pieces of furniture off of the floor. Your eye travels underneath furniture on raised legs, keeping the look light and airy.

Use lighter colours and textures as a focal point for emphasis and drama.

Don't place a television over a fireplace. Together they are visually overwhelming.

Flooring

Make sure to use a modular flooring system. Should water damage occur, pieces can be popped out of place and new product installed easily. Large rolled goods such as carpet or linoleum should be avoided. When wet, mould and mildew occur.

I've had a lot of success with carpet tile over plywood. Carpet tile acts as an insulator. It's removable, easily cleaned and easily re-installed.

Your options for flooring are: porcelain or marble tile, or vinyl or laminate planks. Engineered hardwood is debatable, but plank flooring is your best bet.

Fixing up the basement will add much happiness to you and your home. What is your Lower Level Fantasy? **OH**

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style picks



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PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG

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design ideas

“Having draperies properly fitted makes a huge visual difference.”



IT JUST *Looks* EXPENSIVE

STORY **YANIC SIMARD** | PHOTOGRAPHY **GILLIAN JACKSON**



PHOTO: BRANDON BARRE

Craving that never-look-at-the-price-tag style? The look of luxe is actually more about high-end taste than unlimited money, and with a few guiding principles anyone can get millionaire décor – even on a “first job” budget. Read on for my favourite tips for living the design high life.

A FRESH START

No matter your design past, you can start fresh with the ultimate haute palette: clean shades of white and grey. Using one all-over colour to treat your walls, trim and ceiling gives that sleek Parisian air, connects your spaces and helps visually erase any imperfections. Try CIL’s faintly grey Dove White (10BB 83/020), or Crisp Linen White (61YY 89/040) for a trendy yet classic hint-of-cream look.



INHERIT CULTURE

A millionaire’s estate isn’t built in a day and it usually carries a sense of history. Vintage items contrast the sharpness of new finds, so look to vintage shops for great deals on pieces with some worn-in character. Try an old wooden chair as a bedside table or a salvaged sideboard as a vanity or storage cabinet. Mix heirlooms and old books into shelving displays to play history against the now.

Continued on page 22

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YOUR *Story* BY DESIGN



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DRAMATIC INDULGENCES

If you never indulge, you won't truly love anything in your space. Basing the design around one or two splurge pieces will give a visual centre and draw attention from the "save" pieces. An eye-catching light (like a stunning mini-chandelier pendant) is a great place to splurge, as it's a natural draw for the eye that can be enjoyed from all angles.

SECRET DEALS

Trading off the splurges with smart save pieces is just good business. Avoid cheap substitutes that will look fake or break down quickly; choose inexpensive classics instead. Try plain, white porcelain subway tile for a timeless look in baths and kitchens, minimalist vanity cabinets from big box stores (you can always customize with a great faucet), and mismatched pillows from off-price resellers or vintage shops.



FEEL THE LUXURY

Your eyes aren't the only way you connect with your space; a millionaire's interior is a feast for all senses, especially touch. Plush materials will give both physical and visual texture, so include elements like wool throw blankets, shearling or Mongolian fur pillows, velvets, linens or heavy jute. Treat yourself to an irresistibly-scented candle from an aspirational store. Layering on accents like these builds up a feeling of wealth and can be done over time.

GROW ACCUSTOMED

There are some areas where it's worth it to invest in custom details. Having draperies properly fitted (especially a full wall floor-to-ceiling) makes a huge visual difference versus letting them drag or hang short, so consider splurging on custom panels or having packaged curtains hemmed.

BE A BOSS

A millionaire isn't shy about getting their way. Know what you want in your décor and make sure to be upfront with contractors or installers to get the details right (like installing flooring in a chevron pattern to add style). Don't be afraid to buck trends and make a personal statement. After all, it's you who should love your home the most – you've earned it. **OH**

THINK BIG

A few statement pieces can do a lot more talking than an extensive collection of clutter. Choose upgrades like oversize lampshades, large frames (with wide matting) or big, art-student canvases or prints, vast rugs (in plain Berber to balance the budget). Extend your trim (like baseboards or window trim) by adding strips of plain half-round or quarter-round to the edges to create the illusion of rich elaborate moulding. Then skip the small knick-knacks that bring down the look.

INVEST IN METALS

Combining elements of gold or warm brass with elements of silver and crisp aluminum gives a hint of Art Deco appeal (think Great Gatsby) and lets you add drama without committing to any one trend. Add metallic candle sticks, picture frames, dining chairs (great for indoor/outdoor flexibility), lamps, side tables and/or sculptural objects.

Plush materials, like velvets, add physical and visual texture.





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gardening

weeding out THE GARDEN MYTHS

STORY AND PHOTOS **MELANIE REKOLA**

As a landscape designer and certified horticulturalist, I come across a lot of misconceptions when it comes to gardening.

Myth 1: *Cedar trees attract mosquitoes*

Reality: In nature, cedar grows in moist soil, which mosquitoes adore. It's not actually the cedar that attracts them, though mosquitoes are attracted to shaded environments of any type.



Myth 2: *Garden lines have to be curvaceous*

Reality: Some spaces don't have the room to accommodate the serpentine lines loved by many. Sometimes straight lines just work better and can be equally striking.

Myth 3: *Existing garden soil needs cultivation*

Reality: Cultivation of the earth around existing perennials and shrubs breaks their vital hair roots, thus injuring the plant.

Myth 4: *Gardens are a lot of work*

Reality: Start gardens with a thick layer of good quality soil with additional bonemeal supplement. Spread a good layer of mulch yearly to retard weeds and keep moisture in. Do this and a garden will need little weeding and may never need fertilization or supplemental watering after establishment. How's that for low maintenance?

Myth 5: *Vegetable gardens are an eyesore*

Reality: Veggie garden placement counts. Raised planter boxes add definition and look great flanking a path. Edibles such as leaf lettuce have lovely foliage and many food plants sport pretty blossoms.

Myth 6: *Containers are only for annuals*

Reality: Many trees and shrubs can live in pots for years. They need less care and watering plus offer a bigger bang for your buck than a typical annual display. For example, a \$20 Curly Willow shrub can survive for years in a large pot, has amazing form and makes a bold statement. Compare that with what you spend on annual displays.

Myth 7: *Trees stop growing*

Reality: Trees don't reach a certain height then suddenly stop growing. Some trees do have shorter or slimmer habits that suit smaller spaces.

Myth 8: *Bees sting unprovoked*

Reality: Flowering plant materials are fine poolside choices. Just because you have more skin showing does not make your chances of being stung any greater, though flailing around wildly will increase the likelihood! Stay calm and learn to enjoy and respect bees.

Myth 9: *Overwatering isn't harmful*

Reality: All new plantings require water to establish, yet overwatering quickly drowns plants. Stick your finger in the soil. If you feel moisture, don't water. Plant roots require gaseous exchange for survival and need to dry out a bit between waterings to accommodate this.

Myth 10: *Vines are bad for intact brickwork and woodwork*

Reality: Current studies show vines such as ivy act as a thermal blanket, warming up walls by 15 per cent in cold weather and offer a cooling effect in hot weather by 36 per cent. Plus they look gorgeous! But take care to keep vines out of windows and soffits.

Myth 11: *Landscape designers are landscape architects or garden designers*

Reality: Landscape designers approach design as a whole, including pool, patios and outdoor living spaces, trees and gardens, lighting and even outdoor furniture and accessories. Think of us as exterior designers. **OH**

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SELLING WITH CERTAINTY

TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME HOME SELLERS

STORY **WALTER FRANCZYK**
ILLUSTRATION **SHEILA BRITTON**

Moving house has often been touted as an adventure, but homeowners prefer certainty when selling a home for the first time.

First-time home sellers typically own a small starter home and want to move to a larger house, more suitable for family needs.

Fred Aitken, a broker with Royal LePage Lakes of Muskoka Realty, suggests sellers first think about where they'd like to move. "Check with your bank to make sure you're in a position to buy and sell," says Aitken, who's been selling houses for 24 years.

Prospective sellers must have their financial house in order if they plan to buy another home. A lender will consider car payments, old student loans, credit card debts and whether the family has children attending college or university when it assesses someone's finances. A lender can determine if it's possible to buy a new house before selling the old one. And it may provide the bridge financing to make that possible.

Trying to sell a home on the same date you move into a new one is not easy in today's market, says Aitken. Getting the selling and buying dates to coincide is complicated. "You can get them close but to get it all on the same day is very difficult," he says.

After securing financing, the next step is to find a real estate agent. "Personal referrals are a good thing," says Aitken. "The best way to pick a real estate agent is a referral from a family member or a friend."

Ask to see the real estate agent's track record – statistics that show how successful the agent has been. Find out what the realtor's game plan for selling your home will be. Make sure you're comfortable with your choice of agent because selling your home is a working relationship.

Preparing a home for sale takes time, effort and skill. Laura Willis, a designer and stager, says hiring a stager to prepare a property is well worth the money. "A lot of people who have lived in their home for even two or three years get used to it the way it is and they can't be objective. They can't look at it through a buyer's eyes," says Willis, whose company Refresh also offers sourcing, colour consultations and pre-construction advice.

A professional stager can identify areas of the home that need attention and can make recommendations about paint colours, furniture placement and styling.

A stager can suggest what a home needs to suit the market. "If you're living in the Beaches in Toronto the way that you would stage your home would be totally different than a condo in downtown Toronto. You have to know who your market is," she explains.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SALE:

Edit

The first step in preparing a home for sale is editing – removing items that a homeowner doesn't like or that don't complement the home. "Get rid of it or put it in storage," says Laura Willis, a designer and stager.

Fix

After thoroughly cleaning the house, determine if it needs structural or cosmetic improvements. Ensure all DIY projects are complete and good quality. "Nobody wants to buy somebody else's headaches," says Realtor Fred Aitken. "If there's something wrong, you need to address it. That's the bottom line."

Pick A Colour

Consider the furniture and wall colours. Could someone else imagine themselves in your home? "HGTV has made it so that everyone walking into a house thinks it should be perfect for them to move in," says Willis. "They have trouble seeing past what the original homeowner has in their home. They want it to be perfect. 'I can move in. I don't have to do anything.'" Avoid loud wall colours in favour of neutrals, but not so neutral that the home looks boring.

Take Pro Photos

As the Internet is the first place many prospective buyers look when searching for a home, professional online photographs are essential to selling a home. Photos taken with a cell phone won't do a house justice. "I had a professional do the last home that we sold," explains Willis. "We thought our home was spectacular, but when we saw what she did, it was amazing."

Fluff Outside

Prospective buyers who have seen a house they like on the Internet will usually drive by to look at the place before contacting a realtor. Curb appeal, a tidy yard and attractive landscaping can help prompt a sale.

Open Your House

Open houses for sales agents will familiarize them with your home. Agents with prospective buyers can immediately contact them. Public open houses should be held within two days of the house going up for sale, Aitken says.

The main lesson in first time home selling is to do your homework. **OH**

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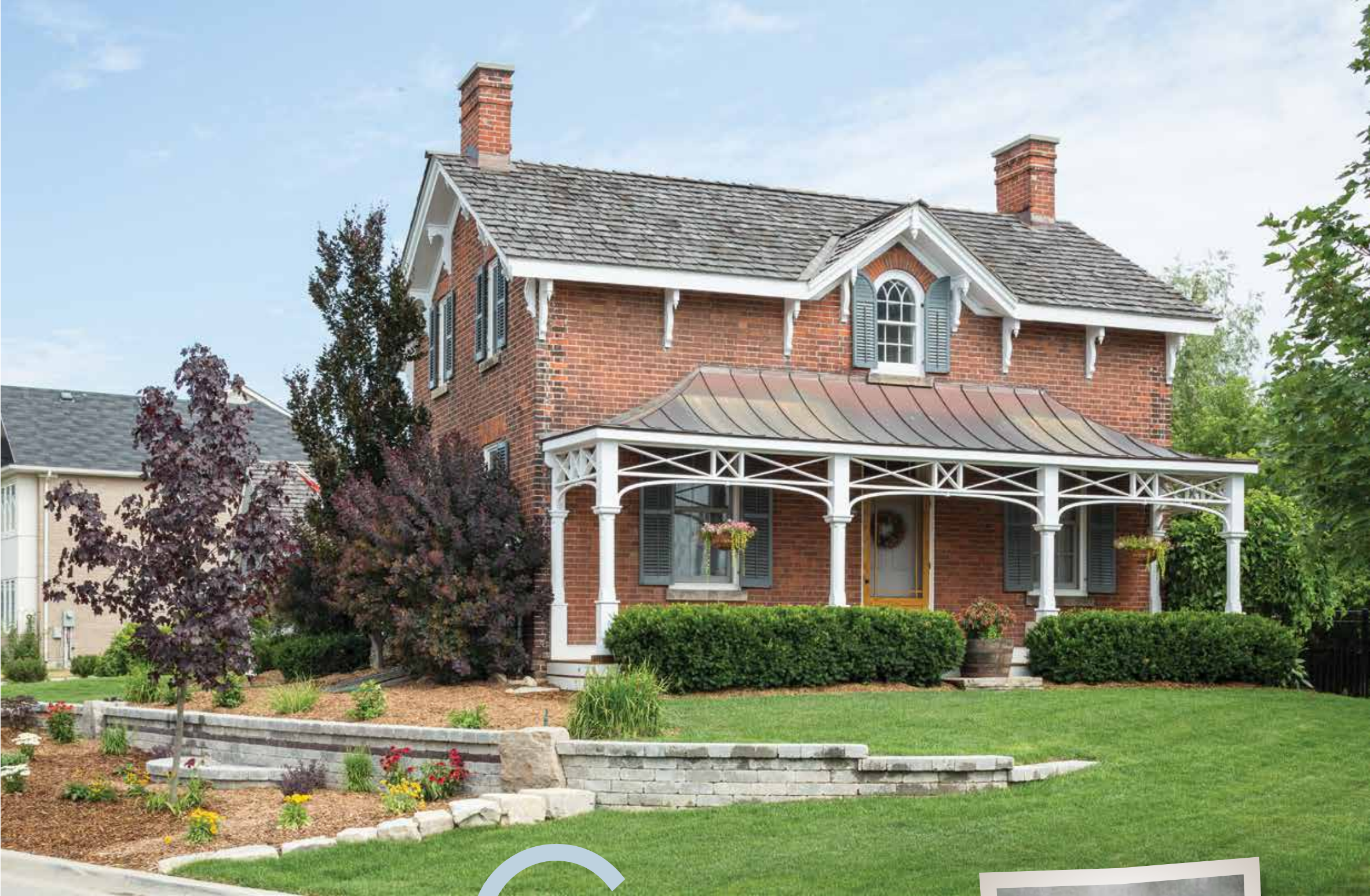


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BELOW: Ken and Kate White stand by the original front door. **RIGHT:** Beautifully preserved, the 1830s home was able to remain in its original location. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** An old photo captures the farmhouse in days gone by.



Ghostly apparitions floating in the centre gable’s elliptical cathedral window. A root cellar where the sound of dragging chains can be heard on stormy nights. An 1830s cast-iron front doorbell that rings at odd moments. Tiny original cupboards, built into walls, low to the ground, hiding shocking secrets from the past. Of course, we’re totally kidding!

Continued on page 31



ALTON VILLAGE *historic home*

STORY **JOYCE TURNER-GIONET** | PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**



ABOVE: The original bell tower looks right at home within the addition and the garage. Cedar shakes tie the original home and the addition together. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Shutters were painted a heritage green to honour the home's original time period. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The home's columns and trellis work provide distinctive curb appeal.



We hate to disappoint those of you who crave a good ghost story, but according to homeowners Kate and Ken White, things are fairly quiet at the historic Thomas Alton Farmstead in Alton Village. However, the property is not without its stories. Legend has it that during the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion, William Lyon Mackenzie King took refuge at the farmhouse while fleeing from colonial officers. Thomas Alton and his neighbours, guns in hand, fended off Tories who were searching for Mackenzie.

Thomas Alton arrived in Nelson Township in 1819 and soon caught the eye of Charlotte Cleaver, whose father, John Cleaver had won 200 acres of land in the 1806 land lottery of Nelson Township (present day Dundas Street, Walker's Line and No. 1 Sideroad). They married in 1822, and Thomas was able to purchase land from his father-in-law in the 1830s. The Alton farmhouse was built in stages, evidenced by two courses of brick walls; the first runs down the centre of the house. This was typical for the era, families added on as money and time allowed. Although there is no official record or cornerstone to corroborate the build date, Kate's research suggests the Cleaver/Altons started the house in the 1830s and finished it sometime between 1857 and 1863. Thomas and Charlotte had a staggering number of children – 16 in total. *Continued on page 32*



The original fireplace still warms the main floor on a cold evening.



ABOVE: Furnishings, like the harvest table, help preserve the home's period feel. **LEFT:** The modern kitchen meets farmhouse with a brick-style backsplash and antique-washed cabinetry.



ABOVE: The spacious sitting room is alive with character, from the wide plank floors to the deep mouldings. Artwork by Kate's aunt, Roberta Patterson, graces the walls. **RIGHT:** The original doors, hardware and window trim still shine. **OPPOSITE:** Family heirlooms are at home in this space.



The inspiration behind the naming of the village has never been clarified, but considering the sheer number of Altons and Alton descendants in the area, Alton Village seems to be an appropriate choice.

In 2006, Mattamy Homes broke ground on the modern Alton Village community. The old farmhouse was part of the land tract. During development, century homes are typically put on a trailer and moved to a new location. Not this one. It sits exactly where it sat in the 1800s – formerly 4059 Dundas Street, now 3215 Settlement Court – Mattamy simply built the pretty little village of Alton around it. The property received official heritage designation in 2007 when it was purchased by Alan and Janea VanderGaag, who spent countless hours restoring it, culminating in a restoration heritage award in 2009.

Excerpts from Alton Heritage House Restoration journal read, “The farmhouse derives its historical value through its association with the 19th century agricultural development and settlement of Nelson Township... an excellent example of a 1.5 storey three-bay Ontario vernacular farmhouse with both Regency and Gothic elements (modified L-plan). The red Flemish bond brick building with brick voussoirs and stone sills has a low-pitched roof with a centre gable and slightly projecting eaves... The main central entrance has a flat transom with moulded wood trim... Wood brackets with drop pendants support a boxed cornice...”

Very few major structural changes were made to the house before Kate and Ken moved in, with the exception of the original summer kitchen, which was torn down to allow for an addition that included a bathroom/laundry room, office and double-car garage. Walls were taken down in the kitchen to create a great room. The north stairway leading to the attic (housekeeper's quarters) was reconfigured. As Ken says, “the home's original footprint hasn't changed, space is simply used differently.” Wood trim and front and rear wood-burning fireplaces are all original. Most doors are painted and a few display dark mahogany inlay work. All doors retain their original hardware.

“People think owning a home with a heritage designation means things must stay exactly the same, but that's not quite true,” says Kate. You keep things similar, but it's not always possible to keep them the same. Take the windows. The original wide stone sills remain and frames and lintels were refinished, but the windows are modern, custom-made by Jeld-Wen to match the 1830s style: all-wood sash inserts in a double-hung, six-over-six configuration with divided-light muntins. In keeping with the time period, they are single pane – a modern energy panel solves the problem of heat loss. Most of the shutters are original, refinished in a historic green that reflects the period.

Ken redid the roof in rough-hewn red-cedar shakes in a dove grey, purchased from **Pacific Cedar**. “In the 1830s, shakes would probably have been white pine, but there's no significant aesthetic difference and cedar will wear better and last longer,” says Ken. He also added the pièce de résistance to the bell tower over the garage roof – a No. 2 cast-iron dinner bell in a crystal metal cradle that he sourced on Kijiji. “In 1830, when family and



farmhands were out in the field, the bell would summon them for meals. In the early 1900s, the advent of the tractor eventually made the bell redundant. Tractors moved so far from the farm, the driver couldn't hear the bell,” says Ken.

The home's front veranda features a bell-cast copper roof supported by chamfered columns, dressed up with Regency-period

trellis work. In 2014, Ken noticed rot in some of the columns. Working with Bill Blake of **Blake Custom Carpentry**, the two replaced deck boards and the framing. The south-facing veranda would have been the traditional front entrance to the home where one could see visitors coming from Dundas Street. Fast forward to 2016 and the Whites enter through the great room, off the driveway. *Continued on page 36*

feature



A claw-foot tub is the perfect addition in the boys' bathroom.



Playtime gets creative with a playhouse Ken built to resemble the farmhouse. The couple's sons Andrew (left) and Brian (far right) enjoy time with friends Saje, Kyera and Ryan. **ABOVE LEFT:** What used to be the master is now a little boy's bedroom. **ABOVE:** Splashes of colour make for a light, cheery space to slumber. **LEFT:** A telescope is tucked into an alcove at the top of the stairs where the boys' rooms are located so they can look at the stars.

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LEFT: The master bathroom was an addition to what was once the housekeeper's quarters in the attic space. **BELOW:** The bedroom is sweet simplicity with a curved headboard and pillows by Blackcatmeow Designs.



The original kitchen is long gone, upscaled with beautiful crown moulding, granite countertops, modern stainless faucets and custom cabinetry, including slide-out spice drawers and double pot drawers with slow-release hinges. All elements that would have made the life of a pioneer woman a hundred times easier.

In the great room, the built-in curio cabinet was originally a door, sealed off. "Ken's a visionary," says Kate. "He sees the possibilities in things, such as working with the original architecture to turn lost space into something beautiful."

Originally the housekeeper's quarters, Ken converted the attic into a huge master with en suite. He removed the original roof and installed a barn-style, board-and-batten dormer with copper eaves and trim sourced from **SPAR-Marathon Roofing Supplies**. He added a **Velux** skylight that closes automatically when it senses rain. The en suite's pocket doors would have been a style completely at home in a Victorian house.

Kate and Ken have furnished the house in a way that respects and reflects its heritage. The eight-foot, square-nailed pine plank floors are dressed with colourful wool rugs. In the great room, an oak harvest table is flanked by distressed wood benches. Prints on the wall and many of the lights are heirlooms from

Kate and Ken's own heritage. In the living room, the piano, commissioned by Kate's great grandfather in 1901 from Guelph's Bell Piano and Organ Company, looks spectacularly at home. One element that had to be removed was the dated wallpaper. "Generations of Altons had resulted in over 500 yards of hideous stuff," laughs Ken.

A heritage home is not for everyone. Perhaps you need a bit of the pioneer spirit

to take on its challenges. However, contrary to what many people think, a heritage designation does come with benefits. Kate calls it "conservation through cooperation," with property tax rebates, access to Ontario's heritage grant program and heritage advisory services. Currently, Burlington has 70 heritage designated properties. Oakville has 500 individually designated properties as well as entire heritage designated districts. **OH**





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STORY **ERIN PEPLER**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

THE PLACE: It's satisfying to find exactly what you're looking for – a perfect rug for the living room, or a quirky décor item that reflects your style. Now, imagine knowing that your new purchase was handmade, ethically produced and fair-traded. **Ten Thousand Villages** in downtown Oakville sells a variety of artisan pieces, including furniture, wall art, textiles and home accessories. The shop is the result of a non-profit program benefiting families in developing countries worldwide, such as Peru, Uganda and Indonesia. All items sold in-store and online are handcrafted by artisans who are paid a fair living wage for their work. Approximately 70 per cent of the artisans are women, many of whom are mothers. For store manager Esther Tchando, the goal is simple yet critical. "We want each person to make enough money to buy food, send their children to school and see a doctor when they are sick," she explains. "When parents aren't fairly paid, kids have to work. This prevents that. Every purchase supports children going to school and having a childhood."



Jessica Generalovic
and Esther Tchando



TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES



THE STYLE: The store carries a variety of unique items from 29 countries across the globe. There's something for everyone, from brightly coloured textiles and elegant stone carvings, to delicate glass pieces and rich woodwork.

WHAT'S HOT: Jewelry is always popular, and a variety of items made from reclaimed saris are always in high demand.

FAVOURITES: Right now, it's all about reclaimed saris from Bangladesh. From duvet covers to cushions and throws, no two are exactly alike, and the colours are incredible. Also popular are hand-knotted and hand-loomed rugs made by Bunyaad, a group of men and women from a small village in Pakistan. Made from 100 per cent wool, these rugs are dyed with natural materials such as tree bark, flowers and vegetables. "They are really, really unique, one-of-a-kind pieces," says Esther. Her enthusiasm is genuine and heartfelt. "We encourage customers to shop consciously, and question – is this a fair price? Not just in profit – think about the people who make the items. If as consumers, we ask these questions, we can help a lot."

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ROOT VEGETABLE GRATIN

RECIPE AND PHOTOS **JENELLE MCCULLOCH**

Switch up your traditional side dish for this super easy root vegetable gratin, bursting with fresh herbs and warm, comforting colours.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large white baking potato, thinly sliced
- 1 large sweet potato, thinly sliced
- 2 beets, peeled, thinly sliced
- 1 large apple, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- A few sprigs fresh thyme, stems removed
- A few sprigs fresh oregano, stems removed
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- ¾ cup goat cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Slice root vegetables and apple to a thickness of about ¼ of an inch. I recommend using a mandoline.
- Place vegetables in a large bowl and toss with olive oil, herbs, salt and pepper.
- Rub the bottom and sides of a two-quart casserole dish with butter. Layer the vegetables, apple and garlic, fanning them out as you go while dropping dollops of goat cheese between the layers.
- Cover casserole dish with aluminum foil and bake for one hour. Remove foil and continue to bake uncovered for another 20-35 minutes or until vegetable tops turn golden. **OH**



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DIY STENCILED LOG-SLICE CHARGERS

STORY AND PHOTOS **TARA CHATTELL**

Add a touch of rustic glam to your table and wow your guests with these pretty gold-stenciled chargers, made from salvaged logs.



TOOLS & MATERIALS:

Log slices, as many as you would like to make in your set, approximately 18 inches in diameter, 2-3 inches thick

Water-based wood stain, colour of your choice

Clean rag, for staining slices

Stencil(s) of your choice

Circular shape for tracing, such as a paint can or large plastic lid

Temporary spray adhesive

Gold acrylic craft paint

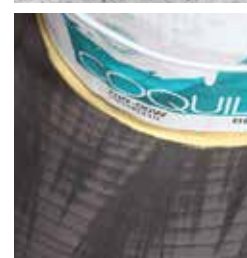
Foam paintbrush, for stenciling

Water or sink, for rinsing stencil

Dry cloth, for drying stencil

Clear, water-based wood finish

Large paintbrush, for applying wood finish



HOW-TO:

Step 1 – Stain

- Using a clean cloth, apply wood stain to the slices according to directions on the product. I found that the wood really absorbs the stain, so I had a better outcome pouring the stain directly onto the wood in small batches and rubbing it in with a cloth. I used two coats of stain. Allow to dry according to product directions or overnight.

Step 2 – Stencil

- Set a circular shape (I used a paint can) in the centre of your first wood slice. With a foam paintbrush, trace around the shape with gold paint, creating a circle on your wood. You will be stenciling between this circle and the outer edge of the wood slice. Remove shape and allow the painted gold circle to dry to the touch. Wipe excess paint off the shape. Repeat with remaining slices.
- Spray temporary adhesive onto the underside of the stencil and place it on the wood where you'd like to begin stenciling. With the foam paintbrush, dab gold paint onto the stencil sparingly to help limit paint bleeding. Lift the stencil and allow area to dry to the touch, about 3-5 minutes, to prevent smudging when stenciling the adjacent area. Rinse and dry stencil, and re-apply adhesive as needed. Repeat this step, matching up your pattern as you go, until the entire outside rim of the wood slice is covered. Repeat with remaining slices.

Step 3 – Apply Finish

- Allow the gold paint to dry thoroughly, according to product directions.
- Apply clear wood finish to the top and sides of the wood slices. Allow to dry according to directions on the product. **OH**

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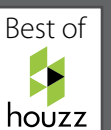


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Neighbourhood NIRVANA

STORY **GINA MAKKAR**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**



LEFT: The neutral palette in the family room takes its inspiration from the outdoors. **RIGHT:** A painted ceiling helps delineate the dining room from the rest of the home. Wallpaper, an elegant chandelier and luxe drapes complete the space. **BELOW:** The front entrance is warm and welcoming.

Home. It's a cosy, rainy Sunday. It's a crackling fire and a warm meal. It's the gathering of family and friends.

In north Burlington, the land that was once home to the Alton family in the early 1800s now houses the quaint enclave of Alton Village. Hundreds of new homes snap snugly into the landscape where rambling dirt roads and open fields once stretched as far as the eye could see. It's hard to imagine that the Alton family ever lived there, but the Alton homestead still rests in its original spot on Settlement Court. The neighbourhood built around it radiates with the warmth and spirit of family, a feature that draws many homebuyers to the area.



On the hunt for a home in Burlington, decorator **Natasha Melanson** of **Natasha Melanson Designs – Home Interiors for Easy Living** and her family fell in love with their home the moment they saw it. Though it had been on the market for several months, ironically, the Melansons almost missed the listing. At first, they dismissed the home because of the small backyard, but moving from a home nestled on a sizeable piece of land, Natasha knew the challenge of maintaining a larger space. They decided to give the home on Bracknell Road a look.

Continued on page 49



The kitchen's open-concept style allows for easy entertaining, as guests can collect and chat around the island, filter to the family room or step out onto the back deck.



“When we finally saw the home, we fell in love with it,” says Natasha. The open-concept footprint, updated kitchen and soaring ceilings were big draws. “I wanted a space that would feel like home and be a place we could all gather. We like to entertain and love to cook, and you can have everyone all in one space, which is why I fell in love with it. And the area had a great neighbourhood feel. We couldn't have picked a better street to live on.”

With many of the key features, like the fireplace, kitchen and pool already in place, Natasha had a great foundation to begin with. Once the family settled in, she began to add décor touches that would make the home their own. A sparkling chandelier adds elegance to the spacious two-storey entryway and sets the tone for the rest of the space. Walls were made fresh again by [Brendan Coutinho](#) of [BHC Painting](#). The entry looks onto the dining room and peeks through to the back of the home. In the dining room, a table that seats 10, sweeping drapes, a luxe drum fixture from Lando Lighting Galleries and wall sconces complete the space. *Continued on page 50*



LEFT: Everything designer Natasha Melanson of Natasha Melanson Designs – Home Interiors For Easy Living touches is styled to perfection. **BELOW:** The small footprint enjoys big fun with an in-ground pool and lounge area. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The deck brings the indoors out and extends the living space. **BOTTOM:** The yard is party ready with a casual-chic bar area.

coastal grey-blues, Natasha took her cue from the indigo reflection of the pool on a bright, sunny day, adding pillows and accents in muted watercolour hues. Many of the pillows throughout the home were custom-made by Q-Design. A sisal rug adds texture. An industrial chic coffee table provides contrast to the soft finishes. Custom millwork completed by husband Chris Melanson surrounds the fireplace and creates a focal point.

A sweeping circular staircase leads to the upper level where simple white wainscoting brightens the upper hallway. Doors are painted black throughout, an unexpected addition that exudes sophistication.

Continued on page 52



The kitchen and family room encompass the back of the home. A mixture of cup pulls and knobs dress up the crisp white cabinetry. Pendants over the island add sparkle. Cabinetry stretches the full length of the kitchen and a pedestal table and desk are tucked within the dining nook. A garden door opens onto the backyard oasis where a cosy conversation area and pool complete the space. **Roger Lafontaine of Pyramid Drywall & Renovations Inc.** completed several of the renovations throughout, from the master bedroom to the upper level wainscoting and outdoor fence and custom waterfall.

In the family room, the camel-coloured sofas served as a cornerstone for the rest of the aesthetic. With a love for cool,





In the master bedroom, a smoky blue-grey wall colour is a neutral, serene backdrop that easily welcomes a variety of accent colours. A tufted headboard with nail-head trim adds softness and texture. The luxe, hotel feel is accentuated with white bedding. Distressed side tables with spacious drawers and open shelves provide function. Glass lamps with white shades add softness.

Down the hall in daughter Emma's room, soft yellow and blue bring a vibrant, warm, gentle energy. The yellow is a beautiful contrast to the blue, giving the elegant bedroom a cool, relaxing vibe. The headboard, bedding, bench and bed pillows were custom-made by Whittington and Co.

Continued on page 54



Soothing hues continue in the master bedroom, where the tufted headboard and soft, hotel-chic bedding warm the space. **OPPOSITE, LEFT:** The wall around the circular staircase is painted a deep shade that complements and connects to the rest of the home. **TOP RIGHT:** The cool blue tones continue in the master en suite. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Millwork elevates the master retreat.

feature

RIGHT: Daughter Emma's bedroom is pretty perfection. **BELOW:** The linen closet turned office is a sweet little haven on the upper level. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Simple wainscotting and a gallery wall complete the upper hallway.



A burnished silver side table adds glamour. In the adjoining en suite, soft paisley wallpaper echoes the pattern in the fabric headboard, tying the two spaces together.

Every inch of the home is thoughtfully and creatively used. In the hallway, the door to the linen closet opens to reveal a hidden gem: an office hideaway. The tiny space is retrofitted with everything a home office could need, from a desk topped with glass from **Burlington Glass & Mirror Co. Ltd.** to integrated shelving for storage. When not in use, it's easily tucked out of sight.

Home. It's what you make of it. It's the paint on the walls, the rug that you chose, it's the celebrations. For the Melansons their house on Bracknell Road feels like home. **OH**



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lounging AROUND AT HOME BRINGING BACK AT-HOME BARS

STORY BARBARA NYKE

An anonymous writer said, "Why limit happy to an hour?" When you have a well-designed and inviting bar in your home, happy hour can last as long as you want.

PHOTO: MAX WEDGE

If you're the kind of person whose favourite cool weather activity is cosy comforts of home, having your own customized bar will help to chase away the fall and winter blues.

Back in the 60s and 70s, it was popular for homes to have a basement bar, complete with wood panelling, a curved bar with a few barstools and a mirrored back wall to display the barwares. Thankfully, that clichéd design trend is over and home bars aren't relegated to the basement any longer.

Discriminating travellers look to the furnishings, ambience and amenities they enjoy in hotels, bars and restaurants to provide inspiration for home décor. Adding a bar brings home the festive lounge feeling of a hotel or trendy club, making it the perfect spot for entertaining with friends over the holidays, or anytime.

Why do you go to bars? What's your favourite spot? Do you like the appetizers? Is it the unique cocktails? The people? What about the music? Perhaps it's a combination of all of these elements.

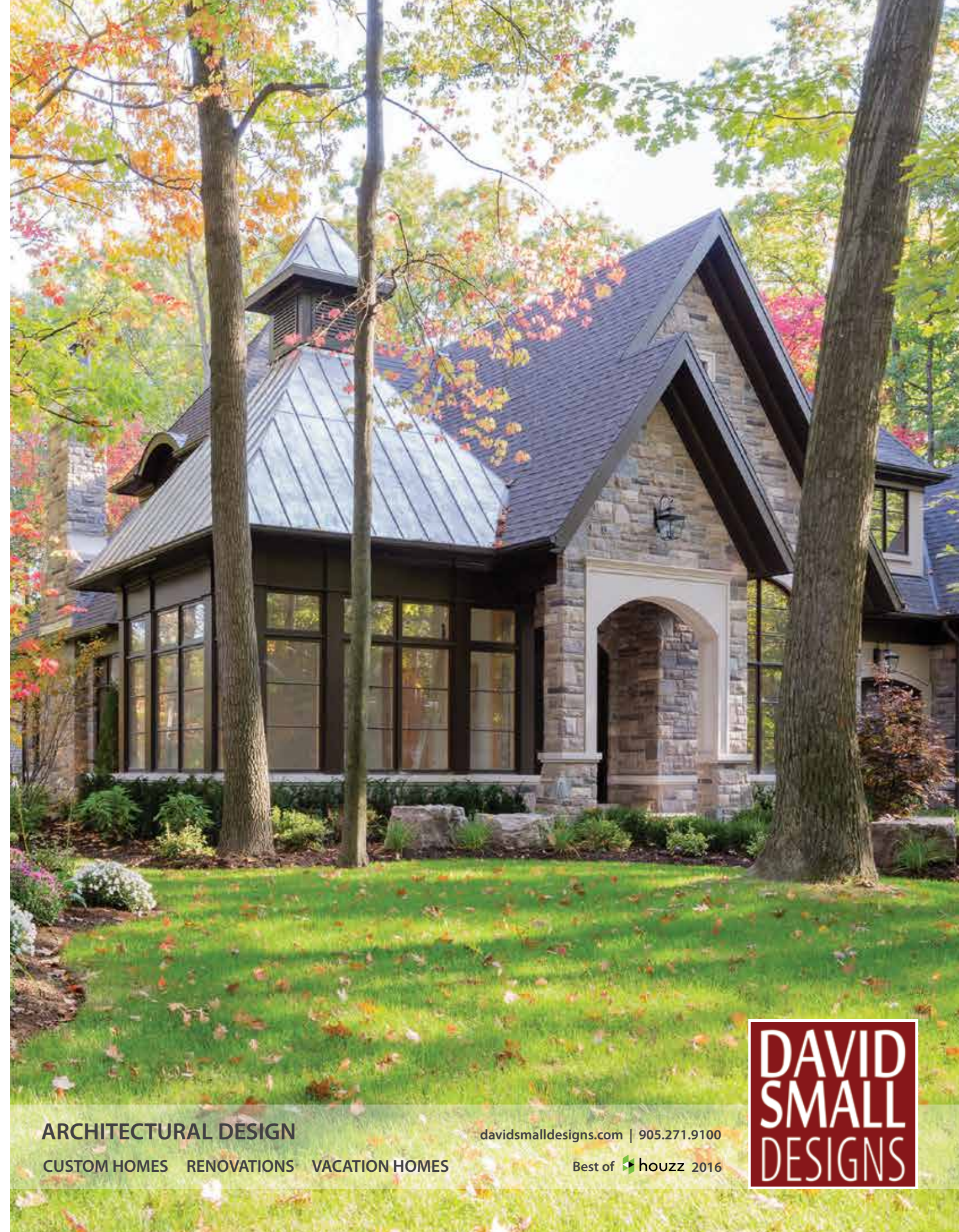
Great design captivates all of our senses and makes it easy for us to move through the space. Successful use of layout, colour, texture, statement furnishings, varying lighting levels and sound systems define a wonderful experience.

Homeowners are investing in their homes and customizing rooms to reflect their personalities and to make them more functional. The trend continues for renovating houses to have open-concept living and cooking spaces. At-home bars are no longer considered to be a separate design item. Bars can be incorporated into the overall design scheme, whether it's a modest well-appointed bar cart, or a free-standing wet bar complete with a sink, running water, specialty appliances and bar stools. Choices for layout might be a bar that's separate from the living room, or a bar that's designed with an adjacent lounge area.

At the end of the day, you want your home bar-lounge to surround you with interesting textures, colours, lighting and ambience and ultimately to be relaxing.

Prepare for more time indoors with a customized home bar – be careful, don't let too many friends and neighbours know about it. You might never leave the house!

Continued on page 58



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Successful design considers functionality and aesthetic preferences. Here are three key considerations to include in your home bar:

1 How will you use your bar? Entertaining is easier with a central gathering spot. Whether you're welcoming family for dinner or hosting a small cocktail party, a bar is a big attraction. You'll have to decide on the size and the location, which will depend on how you plan to use your bar. Do you have a sink for a wet bar? Will it be a stand-alone feature in your home, or will your bar complement an elegantly appointed outdoor kitchen?

2 What's your style? A bar could be a major feature of any room. Its location within the home will determine if the style will be harmonious with adjacent rooms, particularly if they open onto one another, or if the bar will be in a separate room. Then it can be a different style. Do you like a particular design era for bars and lounges? Maybe it's the mod-60s style, or contemporary-luxe style. Its placement, size and how it relates to the other rooms will affect the flow of your home.



3 What features do you want? Customization is the ultimate enjoyment of any bar design. Homeowners can choose from an incredible selection:

- Wine fridge
- Mini-fridge
- Ice machine
- Hot water spout
- Sink
- Drain board
- Under-counter lighting
- Various light levels
- Sound system with customized music selection
- Television
- Storage
- Display area
- Counter space for small appliances
- Wall-mounted oven
- Bar seating
- Lounge area

Defining these criteria will influence your bar's aesthetic, the design materials you choose and its ultimate functionality. **OH**

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EXTREME milkshakes

Foodies across North America are giving in to their sweet tooth to indulge in the new craze of extreme milkshakes or "Freakshakes," as the more insane versions are called.

Black Tap, a New York city restaurant, is on the cutting edge, creating shakes like Sugar Sugar and Sweet & Safty.



They look a bit daunting, don't they? No need to worry, we will show you how to make your own.

Get more recipes at ourhomes.ca/mag/cook



- Grab a chilled milkshake glass and coat the edge of the glass in cake icing.
- Next, dip the coated glass into your graham cracker crumbs.
- Alternate layering the blueberry pie filling and vanilla milkshake until three-quarters full.
- Top with mini pie, whipped cream and any other crazy ingredients you desire.



- Add 1 pint of ice cream and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of milk to your blender and blend until smooth. Easy, right?

- Add cocoa powder and espresso powder to your basic milkshake recipe and blend.
- Grab a chilled milkshake glass and coat the edge of the glass in cake icing.
- Next, dip the coated glass into your cookie crumbs.
- Smear some chocolate sauce into the sides and bottom of the glass.
- Fill three-quarters full with the espresso-infused milkshake.
- Top with whipped cream, mini doughnuts and any other sweet ingredients you may desire! **OH**



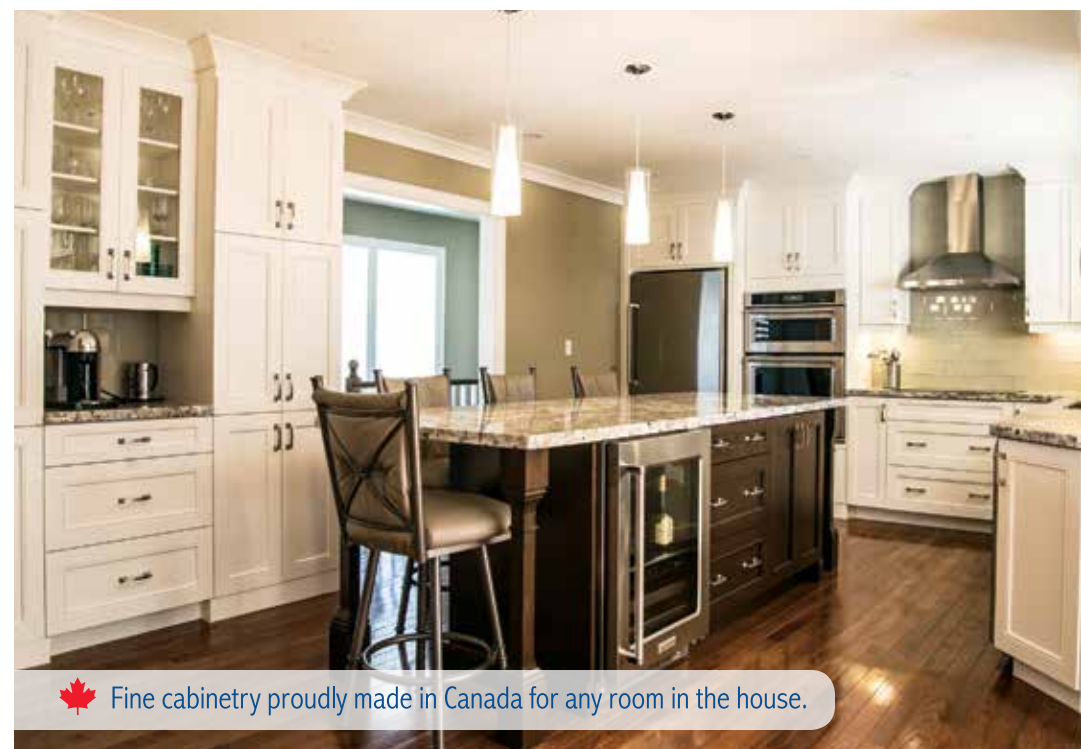
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LIVING SMALL

STORY **GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH**

Home prices are going up, up, up these days. The cost explosion has left many millennials between the ages of 18 and 34 wondering if they'll ever afford a home of their own.

According to a recent CIBC poll, 85 per cent of Canadians consider home ownership important, and 59 per cent of millennials say home ownership provides a sense of personal freedom. That freedom comes at an ever-increasing cost.

In reaction, there's a movement to pare down living quarters – make homes smaller, more efficient and less costly. Tiny houses are becoming a growing trend. It's generally accepted that a tiny house covers no more than 500 square feet. That's a far cry from the average size of a Canadian home, which is still about 1,900 square feet.

Tiny homes are big business these days, but building codes and municipal bylaws are spoiling some of the fun.

The most common tiny homes are those built on trailers that can be moved from place to place. In Ontario, these homes on wheels are considered to be like recreational vehicles, which means, in most places, that you can't live in them full time.

However, some entrepreneurs are skirting the rules and building tiny quarters that fly under the radar. Dylan Euteneier's family company Güte builds prefabricated, moveable shepherd huts on cast-iron wheels in Maxwell, Ontario. A fully decked out hut offers 108 square feet. They are recommended for the backyard, cottage, garden or island and can be used as a bunkie, guest cabin, studio, home office or sanctuary.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GÜTE

The beauty of the shepherd hut, Euteneier says, is that it falls under the same rules as a garden shed. In most Ontario municipalities, you do not need a building permit if your structure is less than 108 square feet in size. Güte's shepherd huts can cost up to \$37,000.

Toronto-based The Bunkie Co. has a collection of prefabricated products that all offer 106 square feet but sit on the ground. The Bunkie Co.'s Premier model is priced at \$36,900. Partner Evan Bare says his clients are using the structures to house overflow guests at their cottages. "Most bunkies go north of Toronto to cottage country," Bare says. It's a niche product that resorts are also hip to offer clients who want to go "glamping" (glamour camping). The all-plywood bunkie does not need to meet the Ontario Building Code. The interior can include a Murphy bed, storage and even an ethanol fireplace.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUNKIE CO.

Bill and Linda McMaster built such a bunkie on their property in Meaford because their future son-in-law's pet allergies mean he can't stay in their main house. "People have slept in it in the spring and of course in summer," says Bill McMaster. "It is especially

attractive as a private, secluded space for reading, napping or meditation."

SMALL HOMES ARE COMING

Tiny homes are just the start of the changing face of housing in Ontario. Ontario's 2011 Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act requires municipalities to change their official plans and bylaws to allow additional units in detached, semi-detached or row-house homes as well as in ancillary structures such as existing detached garages. These new units must comply with the province's Building Code, Fire Code and property standard bylaws.

The City of Ottawa, for example, is in the process of allowing coach houses – permanent standalone buildings – in the backyards or laneways of existing properties. The aim is to increase affordable housing options and make it easier for families to live together on the same property, but in different legal structures.

Port Credit architect Andy Thomson, a tiny homes activist, says the City of Ottawa should receive kudos for having fully embraced the Act. Thomson says it's time for other cities, like Toronto, to follow suit and he's urging Ontario's government to enforce the planning Act. "That would be my advice to the Wynne government – enforce the planning Act," says Thomson.

It won't be long before more companies jump on the tiny home bandwagon. Bare says his Bunkie Co. is preparing to unveil an 800 sq. ft. two-storey that would require a permit and could be a main house. His company is anticipating a future for tiny home communities and a time when small-house living hits the mainstream. **OH**

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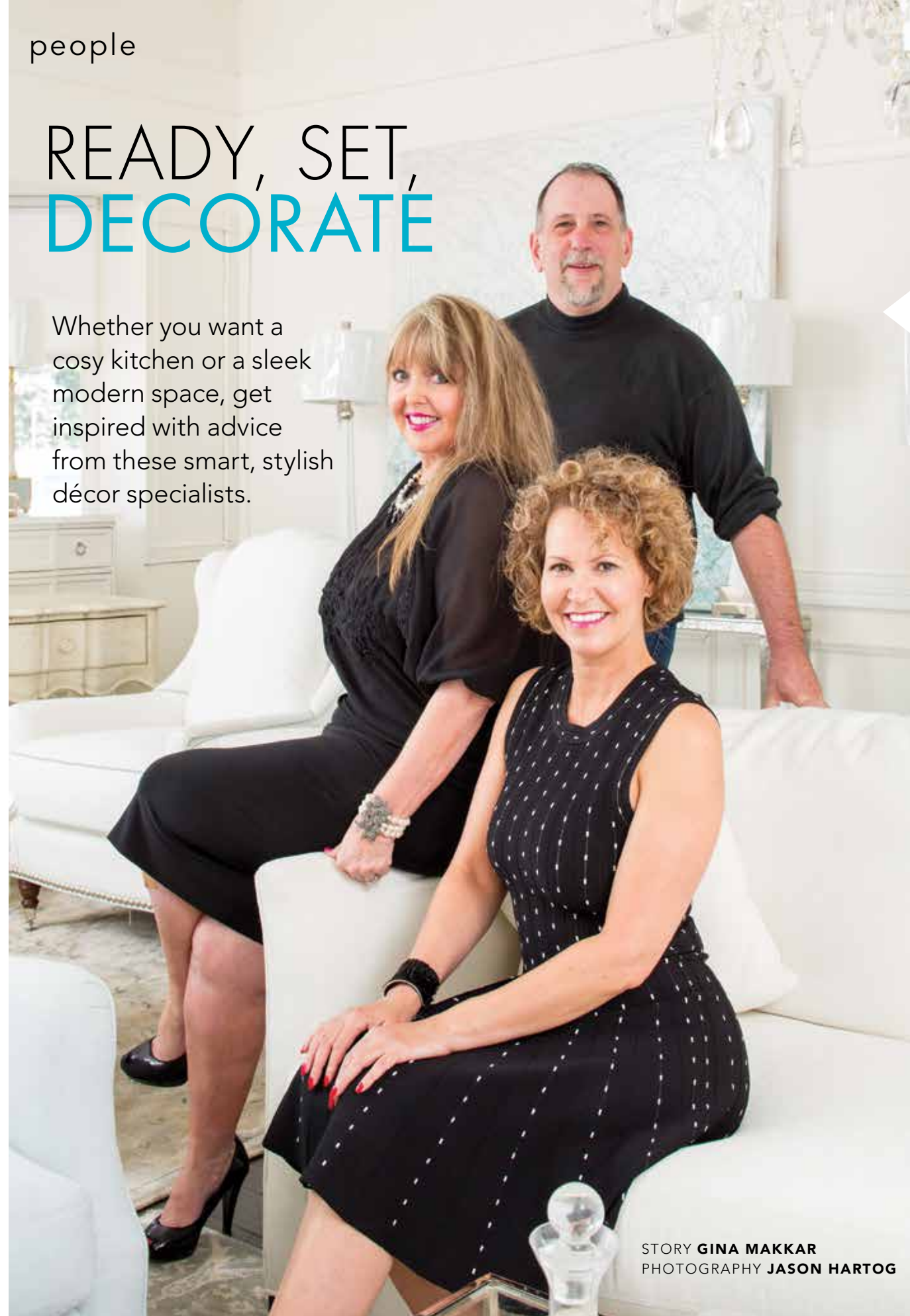
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STORY **GINA MAKKAR**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

JIM ANDERSON, MARGUERITE HARRISON & TINA PHARAND *Andersons*

What's on-trend right now? Clients are asking for sofas in light fabrics in varying shades of white, beige and light grey, with small amounts of pattern in toss pillows and chairs, and soft prints on drapery. Generally, today's clients want their homes lighter. Dark stained wood furniture is being used in smaller amounts, and painted pieces have replaced the traditional dark furniture.

Advice for selecting the right pieces? There was a time when our rooms were set a certain way and they remained that way. Now, clients switch out the pillows and accessories for seasons and occasions. The more neutral the main pieces are, the more creative you can be. We always present this to our clients when we begin the process of redesigning their room.

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Continued on page 68





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What’s on-trend right now? The furniture market is exciting right now, with a lot of new trends emerging to suit a range of tastes. Luxe fabrics like velvets and silk, an eclectic mix of contemporary and transitional pieces and bold pops of colour are all the rage. Mixing metals is quite big right now, and glossy surfaces are being modernized and making a comeback. **OH**



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offer a budget-conscious line called Brookhouse Cabinetry. This line offers a European-style kitchen with various door styles and materials.

What should homeowners consider when planning their space? First and foremost, homeowners should consider day-to-day functionality. Combining a functional space with personal design is key to planning any space. *Continued on page 70*



ROBIN GARVEY

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(Please see ad on pg 77)

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STORY & ROOM DESIGN **JACKIE GLASS**
ROOM PHOTOGRAPHY **PAUL CHMIELOWIEC**

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The smallest hint of sparkle can instantly bring a room to life. Every room in the house, whether light or dark, can benefit from a little shine. From the bathroom to the kitchen, when you add reflective elements to a space, it is suddenly transformed and becomes an attractive room you want to live in.

Both artificial and natural light from light fixtures and windows brighten every room. Reflective metals, glass and mirror accents will enhance these light sources and bounce reflected light around the room, adding life and personality.

For me, I love to maximize and capture light in a room with reflective gilded decorative elements that feature either decadent polished or demure matte finishes. Whether you fancy gold leaf or polished brass for a touch of glam or prefer champagne gold, rose gold or aged brass for a more classic look, they'll all elevate your décor with the Midas touch.

» Use golden accents in small doses so they don't compete but rather complete the space. Even the smallest touches of shine, whether matte or polished in golden, brassy or rosy tones, will add a golden glint you can't ignore.



« Pairing golden tones with dark wood and dark neutral colours like royal blue or the rich purple velvet chairs (as shown here in my client's living room) makes a regal statement in an otherwise traditional room. Set against walls and draperies in whispery golden tones, gilded accents like the lamps, cocktail tables and mirrors truly make the room sparkle and draw the eye toward the light and around the room.



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